The objective of the Government is to promote tourism and to increase the tourist inflow in the country. No year-wise targets as such are fixed. However, the actual number of foreign tourists who visited the country during 1997, 1998 & 1999 are 2.37 million, 2.36 million & 2.48 million respectively.

Development of tourism is a continuous process. Various measures taken to attract foreign tourist to India include development and improvement of tourist facilities, publicity and marketing efforts in the foreign countries through overseas tourist offices, strengthening institutions of human resources development, use of information technology and encouraging private investment in tourism sector including hotels. The development of tourism in any State/region is mainly undertaken by the state Govts./UT Administration. However, the Ministry of Tourism provides Financial assistance for projects/ schemes prioritised every year in consultation with them.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

Financial performance of Ashok Hotel, New Delhi

292. SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH LIBRA: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

whether Ashok Hotel in New Delhi is running into heavy losses;

if so, the details thereof during the last three years, year-wise; and

the various steps under consideration of Government to make the Hotel viable and profitable?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) and (b) The Ashok Hotel has suffered losses during last year only. The profitability details for the last 3 years are given as under:—

Rupees in crores

Year	Profit/loss (before tax)
1997-98	13.90
1998-99	0.01
1999-2000 (Prov.)	(-)8.33

(c) The measures taken by ITDC to improve performance of Ashok Hotel, New Delhi *inter alia* include:

(i) Tactical rate offer based on business volume and occupancy position.

(ii) Aggressive marketing by way of tie-up with international/national airlines for crew and lay over business.

(iii) Issuing of Privilege Cards to valued customers.

(iv) Special Packages to PSU employees instead of conventional discounting

(v) Economy in expenditure.

Classification of tourist places

† 293. SHRJ RAMA SHANKER KAUSHIK:
PROF. RAM GOPAL YADAV:

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

whether Government have categorized tourist places in the country; if so. the category under which the places of Himachal Pradesh including Kullu-Manali etc. have been kept;

whether famous tourist places like Kullu-Manali and others in the country are considerably being damaged by the people carrying hotel and tourism businesses there;

whether Government are taking any concrete steps to preserve natural beauty of these tourist spots; if so, the details thereof; and

if not, what would be the conditions of these places with the passage of time alongwith its impact on the environment?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) to (d) Department of Tourism has not categorised tourist places, however 21 travel circuits and 12 destinations including Kullu-Manali-Lahul/ Spiti-Leh Monastic Circuit have been identified for development of tourist infrastructure.

Development and promotion of tourism is primarily undertaken by the State Governments. However, Department of Tourism provides financial assistance to States/UTs in consultation with them for development of tourist infrastructure. Durig 1999-2000 Rs. 691.79 lakhs was sanctioned for 17

† Origional notice of the question was received in Hindi.